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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/491,585	01/25/2000	Takuya Noguchi	49543(904)	8721

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Dike, Bronstein, Roberts & Cushman
Intellectual Property Practice Group
Edwards & Angell
P.O. Box 9169
Boston, MA 02209

EXAMINER

QI, ZHI QIANG

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2871

DATE MAILED: 01/28/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/491,585

Applicant(s)

NOGUCHI ET AL.

Examiner

Mike Qi

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 December 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1, 2 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant admitted prior art in view of US 5,537,235 (Ishihara et al) and US 4,526,818 (Hoshikawa et al).

Claims 1, 2 and 12, Applicant admitted prior art discloses (page 2, lines 9 -19) that a liquid crystal display device having two insulating substrates bonded to each other via a sealing material, and liquid crystal is filled into a gap between the substrates.

Applicant admitted prior art does not expressly disclose that a cell gap is formed so as to gradually increase from a center to an end of a display area at room temperature to eliminate the irregular color display at a high temperature due to the thermal expansion coefficients difference between the liquid crystal and the sealing material.

However, Ishihara discloses (col.8 line 30 – col.9, line 26; Figs.4A, 4B) that a gap between the electrodes (32a, 32b) at an edge portion (52) of a displaying portion (50) of the liquid crystal display apparatus is increased gradually to prevent development of unevenness in display at the edge portion, which caused by the temperature increased

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at the edge portion, and the substrates (31a, 31b) have a larger gap at its peripheral portion (53) than at its middle portion (51) and such that the gap is gradually increased at the edge portion (52) of displaying portion (50). Ishihara discloses the same principle as this application claimed so as to eliminate the unevenness display including the irregular color display caused by the temperature increase such as the edge backlight.

Applicant admitted prior art discloses (page 4, line 18 – page 6, line 4; Figs. 13-14) that the coefficient of thermal expansion of a liquid crystal (53) is larger by one digit than that of a sealing material (54), so that an expansion amount of the liquid crystal (53) is larger than that of the sealing material (54), and consequently, the center of the liquid crystal cell expands upward and downward, and the cell gap results in an irregular display color. According to this principle, to overcome this kind of upward and downward expansion of the liquid crystal material so as to maintain a uniform cell gap at higher atmospheric temperature, those skilled in the art would use a contrary compensation for the thermal expansion to form the cell gap gradually increase from the center to the end of the display area at room temperature, so that the liquid crystal material would expanse upward and downward to compensate the thermal expansion effect at the higher atmospheric temperature, therefore, maintaining a uniform cell gap at a higher atmospheric temperature.

Ishihara discloses the cell gap is increased gradually at the edge portion of the display area, but Ishihara does not expressly disclose the cell gap is increased gradually from a center to an end of a display area at room temperature.

However, Hoshikawa discloses (col.8, line 27 – col.9, line 43; Fig.8) that using flexible material such as plastic film to form a curved substrates as shown in Fig.8, and that would be the cell gap is increased from a center to an end of a display area so as to obtain a uniform cell thickness over the entire surface of the display panel.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to those skilled in the art to arrange a cell gap is smaller in a center (middle portion) than the other part of the display area and gradually increase from the center to an end of the display area as claimed in claims 1,2 and 12 for achieving a uniform cell gap over the entire surface of the display panel and eliminating the unevenness display at a higher atmospheric temperature.

3. Claims 3-7 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant admitted prior art, Ishihara and Hoshikawa as applied to claims 1, 2 and 12 above, and further in view of US 6,104,467 (Nakahara et al).

Claims 3-4, Nakahara discloses (col.2, lines 19-24) that the accuracy of the cell gap uniformity inside the display region exerted on the display quality is especially significant requiring a surface flatness of not greater than 0.05 μm . Therefore, it would have been obvious to those skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to set the cell gap in the center part less than an average value of cell gaps on an end at room temperature 0.13 μm or 0.08 μm for achieving the accuracy of the cell gap uniformity.

Claims 5-7, as the explanation of the applicant admitted prior art above, those skilled in the art would use a contrary compensation for the thermal expansion to form the cell gap gradually increase from the center to an end of the display area at room temperature, such that the liquid crystal material would expand upward and downward

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to compensate the thermal expansion effect at the higher atmospheric temperature, and maintaining a uniform cell gap at a higher atmospheric temperature; or, on the contrary, to form the cell gap gradually decrease from the center to the end of the display area at a high temperature, such that the liquid crystal material would expand downward and upward to compensate the thermal expansion effect at the room temperature, and maintaining a uniform cell gap at room temperature; and that would be depended on the making process, and that would have been an obvious variation.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to those skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to arrange a cell gap gradually increase or gradually decrease from the center to the end of the display area as claimed in claims 5-7 for achieving a uniform cell gap at a higher atmospheric temperature or at room temperature depending on the making process.

Claim 10, Nakahara discloses (col. 1, lines 6-14) that the super twisted nematic (STN) type liquid crystal display device used as a color display requiring high cell gap accuracy, so that using STN as color display device would have been at least obvious.

Claim 11, Applicant admitted prior art discloses (col.2, line 1-3) that the operating temperature of the liquid crystal display device generally needs to be set between -20 and 70°C in view of using outdoor or in an automobile. Therefore, it would have been obvious to those skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to set the operating temperature ranges virtually between -20 and 70°C as claimed in claim 11 for the outdoor using or automobile using.

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4. Claims 8-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant admitted prior art, Ishihara and Hoshikawa as applied to claims 1, 2 and 12 above, and further in view of US 6,104,467 (Nakahara et al) and US 6,327,011 (Kim).

Claims 8-9, Nakahara discloses (col.6, lines 31-32) that the glass substrates are used and plastic substrates also can be used, and that would have been at least obvious. Concerning the thickness of the substrates, Kim discloses (col.3, lines 34-35; col.2, lines 56-63) using thickness less than 0.7 mm for the substrates. If the substrates were very thin, the substrates would be very easy to be crack. If the substrates were very thick, the liquid crystal display device would get more weight. Therefore, it would have been obvious to those skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to select a proper thickness for the substrate as claimed in claims 8-9 to use 0.55 mm thickness for the substrates.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-12 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

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7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mike Qi whose telephone number is (703) 308-6213.

The examiner can normally be reached on 349.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

Mike Qi
January 14, 2003


ROBERT H. KIM
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800